

# CHAMBERS'S EDINBURGH JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, EDITORS OF "CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE,"  
"CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE," &c.

NUMBER 497.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 1841

PRICE THREE HALFPENCE.

## THE LOWER MUSICAL WORLD.

THE world at large usually bestows little regard on the private circumstances of those who contribute to its amusements, unless in the cases of some few who reach the first degree of distinction. Beneath that point, how many daily pen the paragraph, or wake the strain, or strut through the personation, of whose domestic condition not a thought is taken even by those who almost daily enjoy the results of their labours and genius! It does not even appear to be understood as a general proposition that the efforts of talent are in any way connected with the sterner realities of life. Hence, if a public singer breaks an engagement from illness, the intelligence gives the expecting audience a kind of shock—it does not seem as if such a thing should be—and, while many will feel the disappointment inflicted upon their own expectations, not one perhaps will consider for a moment how it may be with the invalid—how the cold which has deprived him of only a momentary gratification, threatens perhaps to take bread itself for a season from the mouth of the poor servant of the public, if not to plunge him into debts that will weigh upon him for a twelvemonth after. So also, while the audience at a concert luxuriates in some delicious musical phrase belonging to a new piece, they are little disposed to reflect that, when it first fell on the ear of the living composer, it rather perhaps conjured to his mind the money he was likely to bring to his pockets, for the discharge of his over-due house rent, than wrapped his soul in the elysium which they are feeling. We thus take illustrations from the musical profession, because, while the woes of authors and actors have been long descanted on, the not less precarious existence and serious calamities, which are the fate of many who depend on the production of sweet sounds, have been comparatively little adverted to. The musical profession is one in which the middle and lower walks are peculiarly crowded, for, unfortunately, the talent is a common one, the education for it easy of attainment, and the temptation afforded by the rewards of the high masters and mistresses unusually great. The gift itself craves indulgence, and secretly prompts those who are better qualified for sober pursuits to enter upon a professional career. To these circumstances we may attribute the fact that so many are content to spend their lives in vain hopes of musical distinction, or in the drudgery of music teaching, who might have, by a little self-denial and industry, risen to comfort and independence in another walk. They enter this profession under delusive feelings, and only discover when it is too late that, even admitting their possession of a fair share of qualification, another requisite is altogether wanting, namely, a tolerably clear stage on which to exert their abilities. We propose to illustrate this view of the professional musical world by a short history.

Marian Gray was the only child of a respectable tradesman established near one of our cathedral towns, and at six years old was the chubbiest, merriest, healthiest little creature imaginable. It must be confessed she had been somewhat indulged, or "spoilt," as the phrase is. Not having "taken to her learning," she had been suffered to remain in a blissful state of ignorance, even of the contents of the spelling-book. But her parents were people well to do, in the world, and had consequently little to sour tempers naturally good. They allowed her to romp about in shop, garden, or parlour, and, when a quieter fit was upon her, gratified her girlish propensity for dolls, to which she sung lullabies, which no one understood but herself.

One day, on the occasion of a visit from the bishop, there was to be a service more than usually grand at the cathedral, and thither Mrs Gray determined on taking Marian. The child listened with evident delight during the whole of the chanted service; indeed, from her flushed cheek and sparkling eye, her emotion was quite perceptible. But when the full swell of the organ, and the opening bars of a fine anthem, fell upon her ear, something like a scream of delight burst from her lips; and when the same strain was repeated, her rich though infant voice joined, as if by some irresistible impulse, with the chorus. It was that hour which sealed the destiny of Marian. Two or three musical enthusiasts, who chanced to be near enough to distinguish the childish voice which mingled so harmoniously with those of the practised singers, crowded round Mrs Gray during her walk home, assuring her that she was the mother of a prodigy—of a heaven-taught child of song. Yet, however celestial her instruction hitherto might have been, all seemed of opinion that a mundane teacher was nevertheless absolutely necessary. It would be cruel, ungrateful, barbarous, "wicked," not to cultivate so evident a talent. If the pride of parents in their children be a weakness, it is a very pardonable one, and from that hour another strong passion was woven with the pure love which the Grays felt for their child. Divers were the consultations, also, of which she was the object. In the child herself, a change was perceptible; she was far less boisterous than before, though she sang now to her flowers as well as to her dolls. Of course she was taken frequently to the cathedral, and these occasions were her fête days.

At last it was agreed that a governess from London should be engaged to undertake the tuition of Marian, and music was to be considered as the first requisite. It certainly does often happen that those who have devoted their chief attention to one particular study, overrate its importance as much as they under-rate other acquirements. Unfortunately for little Marian, Miss Bennet was of this class, and considered the attainment of music almost as the end and purpose of our being. Now music, in its very highest form, is only a natural language by which the most refined sentiments may be expressed and excited. In a lower point of view, and apart from associations, it can only be considered as a succession of sounds calculated to gratify one of the senses. In no light can it be regarded as a fitting or worthy occupation for the whole being. The intellectual part of man comprehends many different powers, all of which call for their appropriate modes of exercise, and if only one be employed, the whole mental frame-work will be apt to become rickety and infirm. To do Miss Bennet justice, however, what she did teach she taught well, and Marian's talents had a fair opportunity of developing themselves. At twelve years old she was a brilliant performer, possessing also vocal powers of a high order. In her manners and appearance, too, there was a vast difference; the chubby romping child had grown into the delicate and graceful girl. Those who had been her companions were now avowedly no associates for her, while in a country town, where the cordons which separate the different grades of society are far more tightly drawn than in the metropolis, it was found quite impossible to step on an equal footing within a higher circle. The isolation which the parents foresaw for their darling child was a source of real grief to them; and after two or three years of doubt and indecision, Mr Gray determined on taking a step which he believed would overleap the barrier, namely, to dispose of his business, and embark the few thousands he had saved in mercantile speculations.

It was an injudicious proceeding, involving many errors. There was the slighting of old friends, and the seeking of loftier ones—a vanity of vanities—for equality is the great requisite for true friendship. There was the struggling to adopt new tastes and pursuits—an absurdity which sits ill on a man of fifty; and there was implied the ungrateful contempt for an honest station, whose employment had been the staff of his youth and manhood. Had not the motive which actuated these proceedings been a pure one, his conduct would have deserved contempt rather than commiseration. It was indeed a blunder. The Grays removed to the environs of the metropolis, away from their old associates; and as much real respectability did attach to them, they were admitted, in some degree, within the magic circle they so eagerly had sought. At that sunny period when girlish beauty melts into the ripper loveliness of womanhood, the grocer's daughter, the rare vocalist and fine musician, was courted by that more congenial circle to which her fond parents had aspired. But, alas! in the hour of trial, these new friends proved mere holiday companions.

For months a great change had been observed in poor Mr Gray; he had become low-spirited, nervous, and irritable. He was attacked by what at first seemed only a trifling indisposition, but in a few days his symptoms became worse, and he expired so suddenly, that, probably himself unconscious of his approaching end, his last wishes were never known. Only too soon was discovered the cause of his depression. On examining his affairs, it was found that he was all but a ruined man; and as his executors were compelled to obey literally the wording of a will made years before, they invested "all his property" in the funds, the interest to be for Mrs Gray's use, and, at her death, the principal to revert to Marian. It was a mere mockery of what the husband and father had hoped to bequeath—not a sum from which more than twenty pounds a-year would arise! To reduce their moderate establishment to lodgings comparatively humble—to part with Miss Bennet, who had lingered in the family as a friend and companion, and to devise some means by which to increase their slender stipend—were the work of only a few weeks; and to apply to this last purpose Marian's musical powers, was naturally the first impulse.

The kaleidoscope of life was indeed turned, and the petted and caressed, the careless, light-hearted girl, was changed to one of the struggling many. To Marian, indeed, the blow was in a degree less stunning than to Mrs Gray; for, in the young untried heart there is a blissful ignorance of sorrow, which at least precludes the anticipation of it; and while absorbed in grief for the loss of her father, she did not understand that her bereavement was but the first and greatest of a long list of trials. After some inquiries, and many anxious hours, Marian obtained a few pupils, on moderate terms, of course, since, however much a proficient herself, she had as yet had no "experience" in the mysteries of tuition. That same tuition is thought of, indeed, as a light thing; to journey, perchance, for miles through the summer's heat or the winter's cold, for a pittance barely sufficient to provide for the necessities of the day; to impart, or rather, perhaps, to vainly attempt to impart, to the dull or disinclined, those rare things which have been our holiday thoughts and companions. It is debasing household gods to be our servants. True, occasionally a spark of kindred feeling is met, and kindles brightly at the torch which is extended, but these are rare episodes in the teacher's life, which yet do in fact best compensate for his many toils.

With all poor Marian's exertions, she could with difficulty earn a sufficient sum to support her mother and herself, for both had been accustomed to many comforts, and were perhaps not quick at employing the numerous stratagems which a long acquaintance with poverty seems to teach. At last it was suggested that Marian should employ her talents as a public singer as well as an instructress; and after some hesitation, and a good deal of nervousness, the plan was resolved on. Now began a new series of perplexities—the depreciation and petty jealousies of rivals, and the “faint praise” or judicial disapprobation of fastidious critics. She had been reared in the healthy atmosphere of pure principles and warm unselfish affections, and the close companionship which was almost unavoidable with her new associates, had the same debilitating influence which a wild field-flower might experience if transferred to a hot-house. However, in the bustle and excitement of her profession, three or four years passed rapidly away, yet not uneventfully—for to love, or even *fancy* she loves, is a great event in the life of a young girl. Poor Marian was worthy of a better fate; but to parody a beautiful verse of Moore's—

“The heart too often is tempted to cling  
To the nearest, and not to the loveliest thing.”

Separated from an intimate association with another class, it was indeed little to be wondered at that an attachment sprung up between herself and one of her musical companions. Gifted with a fine person and splendid voice, Charles Manning was just one of those characterless mortals whom the hand of chance may mould to good or evil. Their voices blended harmoniously; in public they usually sang together, and the necessary rehearsals drew them into terms of intimacy. Poor Mrs Gray had for years buoyed herself with the hope that a brilliant marriage would end the early trials of her child; but such a clearing off of the clouds of adversity happens more frequently on the page of the novelist than in the acted drama of life. At length, however, after many protestations and entreaties, she consented to the marriage, and thus yielded the only hope she could rationally entertain that Marian would ever cease from her life of toil and responsibility; for she well knew that not only was her reputation better established, but her talents were far more marketable than those of young Manning.

They were married—and it was called a love-match, being one of the million instances in which that word is taken in vain. Without vice, they had both many weaknesses, and our weaknesses are the rank and tangled weeds which cling round the heart, crushing and withering its better impulses. Either had they made some strange miscalculation, or they were especially imprudent, for it was soon discovered that their means were insufficient for their support. Oh! the bitterness of reproach even from the lips that we have but *seemed* to love! And how yet more bitter it is to know that wild passion has cooled to at least the chill of indifference! Marian's health, which had never been robust, soon gave way—even when the truth first dawned upon her; and it is worthy of remark, how powerful as a magician's wand is the touch of worldly cares in testing true affection. Probably, had Marian and her husband basked in the sunshine of prosperity, it would have taken years instead of months to prove to her that he was ungenerous, and could be unkind.

Change of scene was recommended for her malady, and it was suggested that probably her native air would prove the most beneficial. In this last emergency, Mrs Gray summoned more energy than she had ever appeared to possess. A few trinkets, purchased in happier days, were yet at her disposal, and though not very valuable, they served to replenish an exhausted purse. To the neighbourhood of their old home the widow and her child repaired, leaving the youthful husband to pursue his professional career in the metropolis. For weeks they had remained unrecognised, venturing out from their temporary and humble dwelling but for half an hour towards the close of the day, for it was late in the summer, and Marian could neither command a carriage nor walk during the heat. They had recognised, however, many once familiar faces, though time had worked its usual change; and making themselves known, they received so many acts of kindness, that the poor invalid's health seemed re-

turning, and her very heart was freshened. Oh! the value of old tried friends, whom to meet after a long absence is like the renewal of youth—old friends to whom, though sometimes neglected in the strife and struggle of busy life, we do turn in the hour of trouble; who reprove us, it may be, for our faults and negligence, but whose very anger bespeaks familiarity and affection. Surely there is something mournful in the lot, or wrong in the heart of him whose soul does not yearn at the words! Loftier acquaintances and newer companions had surrounded Marian during her metropolitan career, but in sickness and in poverty they were her old friends who cheered her. The transient appearance of convalescence was deceitful—the mere flickering of the taper before it expired. She died at the last suddenly, though not before she had seen and regretted the errors of her short life; errors, in fact, attributable to a defective education, and to those false steps in life which led to an intricate chain of circumstances involving her fate. It is scarcely necessary to add, that her young husband soon became reconciled to her loss. He is still pursuing his precarious profession, though it is rumoured he is about to marry a rich widow nearly double his age; and poor Mrs Gray is living in her native town, comforted, assisted, and surrounded by her old friends.

The story of Marian Gray is one of every day life, unadorned by any startling or romantic incidents, but, being true, it is surely not without its moral. In her we see the possession of a musical talent become the leading cause of a series of circumstances which rendered her life one of excessive toil, great unhappiness, and short in duration. And this was simply owing to the mistake of supposing that the possession of this gift was necessarily to raise her above her native situation. Let her tale serve as a warning to the many who are liable to the same fatal error. Musical talent is a delightful qualification, and, under the guidance of prudence, may enable those who possess it to do much to gratify and attach others. But the question as to the propriety of employing it for the gaining of daily bread, is widely different, and calls for much grave deliberation. The ranks of the musical profession are already too crowded to admit of a station being easily awarded in them; and they who would succeed, must join great energy to decidedly extraordinary talent. Perhaps there are more melancholy and true stories to be told of third and fourth-rate musical professors, than of the followers of any other vocation;—stories of hope, not blighted in a moment, but rotting hourly away—of sensibilities, seemingly but highly wrought to be the more surely wounded. Perhaps we are singular in the feeling, but to us there is always something inexpressibly melancholy in the public performances of “wonderful children” or “infant prodigies.” We see the little creature in the gaudy trappings so unsuited to the careless, thoughtless years of innocence and childhood, and we fancy we can detect in the stealthy glance it casts around some traces of incipient vanity. Then to the mind of common reflection come thoughts of the intellect warped and forced, of pride and envy that must sully the purity and simplicity of youth, and the worldly shadow that darkens its sunshine. A few such prodigies do advance to stations where they command permanent admiration, and realise a competency; but how many sink into early graves, or only go on to a career of obscure and cheerless drudgery! It would be well for individuals in the middle and lower walks of life, who seek to escape from their daily toils by means of a musical gift, to consider well if a certain subsistence from an useful, and therefore honourable, calling, is to be well exchanged for the uncertain issue of a professional career. Our towns, the metropolis particularly, swarm with musical professors of both sexes, and the competition which naturally arises amongst them, brings their occupation to a miserable ebb. Amidst the struggles of poverty—not a consistent honourable poverty, but a poverty of shifts and expedients—the moral feelings suffer dreadful abrasion, and in time become altogether blunted. Thus it is that we are to account for the not unfrequent phenomenon of those who possess the finest gifts of nature being among the most degraded of social beings. And hence it is that many rigid persons denounce music altogether as a thing which only leads to vice and misery. It, no more than any other of the gifts which a bountiful Providence has conferred upon our nature, does this; it may be used prudently as a source of occasional enjoyment. But it will unquestionably

lead to the worst results that can be anticipated from it, where it becomes the object of an imprudent dependence.

#### SIR JAMES CLARK ON CLIMATE.

##### SECOND NOTICE.

WE found ourselves unable, in the previous article upon this subject, to include the remarks of Sir James Clark upon the climates of various regions which invalids are in the habit of frequenting, or which it would be proper for them to frequent. In his estimation, Malta stands high as a place of resort for invalids. Quoting a friend who had attentively observed the peculiarities of the island, he says, “The diseases in which Dr Liddell has observed the climate of Malta serviceable, in conjunction with the important preliminary sea-voyage to it, have been asthma connected with chronic bronchitis, scrofulous swellings and eruptions, dyspepsia, and hypochondriasis, and that atrophy and disordered state of health which are induced by over-active therapeutics. He considers the climate to be peculiarly conducive also to the health of the aged. Dr Sankey has found it beneficial in chronic rheumatism. The mortality amongst Maltese children is enormous, from their scanty and improper food; but the Maltese women, when well fed, make excellent wet nurses, and the English children that are reared by them, or by their own mothers, thrive remarkably well in Malta. The diseases of children, such as measles, scarlet fever, and hooping cough, are comparatively mild.

Strangers reside chiefly in Valetta, the capital of Malta, which is one of the finest towns in Europe. It is built on a declivity sloping from south to north-east. The principal streets run north and south, and are swept by the cold northerly winds. The houses are excellent, and the rooms large and lofty.

In Valetta, the inns are numerous and good, and there is no longer any difficulty in finding commodious lodgings, with Turkey carpets on the stone flooring, fires, and other English comforts. Country-houses, with gardens and orange-groves, may be readily obtained at short distances from the city. The markets are plentifully supplied, and at moderate prices. Valetta is abundantly provided with excellent water, brought from a spring six miles off by an aqueduct. The other places in the island are mainly supplied by rain-water collected from the flat roofs of the houses, and kept in cisterns excavated from the solid rock. The principal streets, which are kept very clean, are either paved or macadamised, and readily dry after rain. The roads leading to the country, and round the harbours from Valetta, are kept in good condition, but they are of no great extent or variety. Saddle-horses, and close or open carriages, can always be obtained at moderate prices; and there are few entire days in the winter without some hours of sunshine, in which delicate invalids, suitably clothed, may not take exercise with advantage in the open air, on foot, on horseback, or in a carriage. The Maltese boats are clean, commodious, and safe, and will be found, during the numerous calm and mild days of winter, to be the most agreeable vehicles for conveying delicate invalids round the harbours and fortifications, in which the great interest of Malta consists. The most desirable places in Valetta for a winter residence, are those with a southern and eastern aspect, near the Barracca, looking towards Floriana, or into the great harbour in Strada Levante.” Dr Liddell sums up his account of the island by saying that “no place in the south of Europe can compete with Malta for a dry, bracing air in November, December, and part of January,” the seasons at which it is most important for British invalids to resort to a climate different from their own.

Sir James Clark speaks very favourably of Madeira as a residence for patients threatened with consumption, though, at the same time, he is convinced of the total inutilty of sending persons there who have reached an advanced stage of the disease. An article on Madeira having lately appeared in the present work, we only give Sir James Clark's remark on the period at which invalids ought to visit the island—a point of no slight importance. “Invalids intending to pass the winter in Madeira should leave this country in October. The beginning of June is sufficiently early to leave the island to return home, as, before the middle or end of that month, the weather in England is seldom sufficiently warm, or at least steadily so, for a consumptive patient who has passed the winter in a mild climate.” The Canaries and the Azores do not differ so much from Madeira as to render a peculiar description of them necessary. But they might afford a beneficial change of scene, and Sir James Clark remarks that a removal “from the Azores to the Madeira, and from thence to Teneriffe, would, in many cases, prove more beneficial than a residence during the whole winter in any one of these islands.”

The Bermudas have recently been much spoken of as a resort for invalids. Sir James Clark does not seem to think very highly of them. “They consist (says the volume before us) of a cluster of small low islands. The largest is only twelve miles long, and about three broad; and the whole extent of the group, from one extremity to the other, is not more than twenty miles. The highest point of land in any of the islands does not exceed 200 feet above the sea level.



They are composed chiefly of a coarse shelly sandstone, of an extremely porous quality, and so soft, as to be cut easily with the saw and adze into the various forms necessary for building, &c. From the absorbing nature of the Bermuda rock, the soil, which is naturally thin, is extremely arid. There are no springs, the inhabitants being almost entirely dependent upon rain-water, which is collected on the roofs of the houses, and by other artificial means, and preserved in stone cisterns, called *tanks*. The water is generally good, but the supply is occasionally deficient in very dry seasons.

Bermuda may be considered, upon the whole, a healthy place. There are no endemic diseases, although occasionally, during the autumn, fevers of a character resembling those which form the scourge of the West Indies, prevail with considerable violence; but this is by no means an annual occurrence. Bowel complaints are the most common diseases. Consumption is also frequently observed among the inhabitants; and it appears from the Army Reports that inflammation of the lungs and consumption are very prevalent among the troops stationed there—the ratio of mortality from consumption being nearly nine per thousand of the strength annually, which is more than among the troops in the United Kingdom, or in any of the Mediterranean stations.

The cool season, that is, from October till May, is the most healthy, and the only part of the year during which this climate is at all suited to invalids. One of the principal objections to Bermuda, as a winter residence for pulmonary invalids, is the prevalence of strong winds, which are such as to justify the epithet applied by Shakspeare to these islands, 'the still-ver'd Bermoothes.' Of these winds, the damp oppressive south-west is the prevailing; but the most violent and injurious to delicate invalids, during the winter and spring, are the north-west winds, which are generally dry, sharp, and cold. Compared, however, with the climate of the coast of America, under the same latitude, Bermuda may be said to have no winter. The summer is very hot, being generally admitted, I believe, by those who have experienced both climates, to be more oppressive than the same season in the West Indies. This may be accounted for partly from the want of the trade-winds, and partly from the bare arid nature of the soil, which becomes quite parched during the summer. Vegetation almost disappears at this season, the cedar and wild sage alone resisting the heat. Dew is occasionally deposited in winter, when a cold night succeeds a hot day, but never in the summer. The principal fall of rain is between August and October; there are also very heavy showers in January and February, but seldom any during the summer months.

Compared with Madeira, which lies in the same parallel of latitude, the climate will be found much more unequal. The temperature of the two places during the winter may be much the same, but there is a wide difference in that of summer. The coolness of this season at Madeira forms a striking contrast with the oppressive heat of Bermuda.

With so few advantages in point of climate, the Bermudas are not likely to become the resort of invalids from this country. Their great distance, the infrequency of communication with England, and the defective accommodations for strangers, form additional objections. Provided, however, that domestic circumstances rendered Bermuda a convenient residence, invalids might pass the winter there safely, and perhaps with benefit. There are many beautiful spots in these islands, where, protected from the northerly gales by the cedar-clothed hills, the invalid might find sufficient space to enjoy exercise in the open air almost every day during the winter. The neighbourhood of the little town of Hamilton, situated nearly in the centre of the islands, affords perhaps the most favourable situation for such a residence."

Among the West India islands, Barbadoes and St Kitt's are peculiarly recommended by Sir James Clark as those best fitted for the residence of patients affected or menaced with consumption. The climates of the other islands appear also to be very favourable, on the whole, to health. "Dr Musgrave, who has practised twenty-six years in Antigua, says that it has never fallen to his lot to see a single case of consumption commencing in a European, whether hereditarily predisposed or not, who had arrived in the West Indies in perfect health. Dr Arnold found the climate of Jamaica very favourable to young persons from fifteen to twenty years of age hereditarily predisposed to consumption." For those proposing to spend any part of the winter there, the following instructions must have peculiar interest. "The proper means to prevent any injurious effects from the increase of temperature, is to live somewhat more abstemiously than usual, and upon less exciting food. The quantity of wine generally drunk should be diminished, or it may be advisable to abstain from wine altogether. Long exposure to the direct rays of the sun should also be avoided. Attention to these circumstances, with the use of a little cooling laxative medicine, will generally be all that is necessary on arriving in the West Indies. For some time afterwards, a continuance of the same simple unexciting regimen should be persevered in, in order that the system may become habituated to the exciting influence of a high temperature, and until the increased cutaneous secretion, which appears to be one of the principal means employed by nature to enable the living body to bear the

heat of a tropical climate without injury, is fully established. Whether approaching or residing in the West Indies, this, says Dr Arnold, is the grand secret for the preservation of health; and to the neglect of it, and the adoption of an opposite mode of living, is to be attributed in a great degree the sickness and mortality among the European residents in these islands, and, indeed, in all tropical climates. Exercise in the middle of the day, and exposure to currents of air while in a state of perspiration, should be carefully avoided. From these two causes, and an over-exciting diet, are produced a great proportion of the diseases which prove so fatal to Europeans in the West Indies. With respect to clothing, it is now universally admitted, I believe, by those who have resided in a tropical climate, that flannel is the safest and best covering next the skin.

There is one circumstance in the character of tropical diseases, which the European visiting these colonies should be fully impressed with, and that is, their violence and very rapid progress. This is more especially the case with fevers and inflammations; in such cases, the remedies require to be applied early, and with an energy proportioned to the violence of the disease. On this account it is advisable to call in medical advice the moment disease makes its attack."

In a lengthened appendix, Sir James Clark describes the climates of the southern hemisphere, including those of the Cape of Good Hope, the Australian continent and isles, and New Zealand. Regarding the first of these regions, it is said that "fevers of the intermittent and remittent type are extremely rare among the troops, and unknown among the inhabitants. The troops are less subject to diseases of the lungs at Cape Town than in our other colonies; and there is a smaller proportion of deaths from consumption than has been observed on any foreign station, except the East Indies. Rheumatism, which is more frequent among the civil inhabitants even, than among the troops, prevails among the latter to a greater extent than at home or in the other colonies."

The general climate of Australia is described as remarkably healthy. "Fevers are almost unknown, and the same may be said of hooping-cough, croup, &c. Europeans, enervated by a long residence in India, become very much invigorated and improved in health by a short stay in Australia." As this is a point of immense importance in these emigrative days, we quote a passage from the Military Statistical Reports, strongly confirmatory of the preceding statement. "The extreme salubrity of the climate may be estimated from the circumstance, that on the average of 20 years, from 1817 to 1836 inclusive, the mortality did not exceed 14 per thousand of the force annually, whereof more than a fifth part arose from violent or accidental deaths, principally attributable to the nature of the duties on which the troops were employed. Thus the mortality from disease alone could have amounted to little more than one per cent. annually, being lower than in any other colony, except the eastern provinces of the Cape of Good Hope, to which the climate of Australia is in many respects similar."

Few authentic and statistical observations have been made on the climate of New Zealand. The general report, however, is in favour of its salubrity. Its climate is said to be mild, soft, and equable; and those who are disposed to emigrate may feel pretty well assured that their health will in no respect suffer by a removal to this portion of the southern hemisphere.

We regret that we cannot follow Sir James Clark into his valuable observations on mineral waters. Dyspeptic complaints, asthma, gout, and rheumatism, he considers, may all be benefited by courses of mineral waters. Factitious or artificial mineral waters may also be used, Sir James conceives, with great advantage in many cases; and our concluding extract from his volume shall be one referring to this particular point. "As many persons, in whose complaints mineral waters are indicated, must find it inconvenient to take a course of them at their sources, it may not be irrelevant to our present subject to say a few words respecting the factitious mineral waters introduced into this country by the late Dr Struve of Dresden. I have had abundant experience of the beneficial effects of Dr Struve's waters in the diseases which are treated of in this work. And I feel satisfied that when their effects are more generally known to the profession, and the manner of using them better understood, they will be extensively and beneficially employed in a numerous class of diseases, and especially in disorders of the digestive organs, &c. At the same time, if the patient could conveniently take a course of the natural mineral water at its source, I should decidedly prefer this."

In one respect, however, the patient has an advantage in taking the factitious mineral waters, as they may be changed according to the circumstances of the case during the progress of the course. For example, in many cases it will be very desirable to begin with a mild water, such as that of Ems, or Salzbrunn, or of Saratoga, as a preparative for the more active and more exciting waters of Marienbad, of Carlsbad, and Kissingen; and these again may be succeeded by a short course of the chalybeate waters of Eger, of Pyrmont, or of Spa.

The warm sea-water bath will, in the greater number of cases, promote the beneficial action of the waters; and at Brighton this can be had very conveniently.

The effects of the dry bracing air at this place will also contribute, more especially in relaxed constitutions, to the salutary operation of the waters."

Perhaps the elaborate tables, showing the different temperatures of various places in England, the continent of Europe, and elsewhere, which conclude the work now under notice, will be held by the public, and justly, as among the most valuable portions of its contents.

## THE GUDEWIFE OF BURNSIDE.

A STORY FOR THE COTTAGE FIRESIDE.

BURNS, in his "Halloween," has made the word *sowens*, or, as he spells it, "so'ns," familiar to every one. Few, however, know what sowens are, or how they are prepared; and on these points we shall say a few words.

To produce the dish called sowens, a quantity of the husks—in Scotland erroneously called *seeds*, which, previous to being ground into meal, are stripped from oats by the process of *sheeling*—are put into a large wooden vessel—commonly a washing-tub—filled with water. If the water be warmed to a certain degree, it is supposed to be favourable to the subsequent fermentation; but mistakes even in this trifling matter are by some believed to be fatal to the savouriness of the future food. In this state the seeds are allowed to lie for about eight days, or at least till the acidity, which is soon generated, has entirely dissolved and separated every particle of the grain which had escaped the previous operations of the miller. The whole is then strained through a *sowen-sieve*, to separate the husks from the more nutritive part of the preparation; and the water, together with the modicum of dissolved meal with which it is now mixed, is allowed to stand till the latter has fairly settled to the bottom; after this the acid water is poured off, and fresh water added in its place. The material of the sowens, a liquid pulpy substance, is now ready for being cooked; and this is done by simply taking from the tub such a quantity as may be deemed necessary for a meal—generally the supper—and boiling it for a certain length of time; but as what remains has frequently to be kept for ten days or a fortnight—that is, till the whole can be used—it is customary to pour off the sour water occasionally, and supply its place with fresh, and this is called "sweetening the sowens."

The little anecdote which we are about to relate, belongs to a period when such things as masters and mistresses, in the usual acceptation of the words, were scarcely known in Scotland. The whole of the farmers, and no small portion of the lairds, together with their respective helpmates, were uniformly designated as the gudemen and the gudewives of such and such places. The reader, it is therefore hoped, will excuse the retention of the primitive epithets. In those days the gudewife of Burnside was rather shrewd in her dealings with others; skilled in most of the domestic duties of the time, and withal entertained the most sublime ideas of her own superior sense and discernment. Such being the case, it may easily be conceived that it was no easy matter to convince her of being wrong, however glaring might be the blunders which she committed, or the errors into which she fell; she had always a ready knack at tracing these to the misconduct of some one else—generally to that of her serving maidens, who were in this way very convenient scapegoats, or rather beasts of burden, being always at hand, and ready to be saddled with the blame of whatever went wrong. Let not the reader accuse these damsels of want of spirit. They had found, by experience, that to be constantly engaged in attempts to convince their mistress that she was wrong, while living under her roof, was utterly unavailing.

The gudewife of Burnside, however, was as credulous as could have been wished with respect to all the popular beliefs of the period. She had the most perfect faith in the appearance of ghosts and apparitions of all descriptions. Wraiths and warnings had found a prominent place in her creed; and for the incantations of witches she entertained the most superlative terror. These peculiarities in her disposition were sometimes turned to good account by her dependants, more particularly if the latter happened to have that quickness of perception which enables one to see at a glance how the foibles of others may be made subservient to a certain purpose. By working upon her credulity and superstition, her handmaids not unfrequently succeeded in carrying things their own way, when, by direct means, they might as well have tried to remove the Gargantuan as to alter her resolution.



Among the things in which she prided herself, not the least was her skill, real or supposed, in the art of making sowens. Whenever it was necessary to steep a fresh quantity of seeds, the most particular, though sometimes not the most intelligible, directions were given to the lasses concerning them; and every thing was required to be done by exact rules. Notwithstanding these precautions, it did occasionally happen that the "making" was mismanaged. In one of these instances, some serious mistake, as it appeared, had been committed—a mistake which, if truth must be told, was neither more nor less than the raw sowens having been too long kept, from too large a quantity of husks having been put into the water at one time. Grievous complaints as to the unpalatable nature of the food which they afforded, began to be uttered by the farm-servants, for whose supper they were regularly prepared. But as the exact portion of seeds which were to be steeped had been ordered by the gudewife herself, to mention the circumstance to her was almost a hopeless proceeding, and yet, without her concurrence, no effectual remedy could be expected. Matters were verging to a crisis, when at last one of the lasses, more famed for a ready invention and a forward turn than any of her fellow-servants, fairly ventured to take a bet with an individual of the other sex, that "they would get porridge to their supper on the morn's night at the latest." The possibility of such an event could scarcely be credited: nevertheless, as Jenny was known to be "a throu'gawn hizzie," and "a cummer wha wad stick at naething," the result of her undertaking was looked forward to with some impatience.

As a preliminary step, Jenny fairly introduced the subject to the gudewife next morning, and told her that the men had been complaining seriously about the sowens for some time past; that they really were not "folk's meat;" and that she thought it would be necessary to give them porridge to their supper. From the manner in which Jenny told her story, it was almost evident that she did not expect her proposal would be complied with; and if such was the case, she was not mistaken. Instead of being ordered to prepare a more palatable evening meal, she was herself subjected to half an hour's alternate scolding and grumbling.

"Ye think!" began the important dame: "I would like to ken wha pays you for thinking! A bonny ane, indeed! to presume to think as long as there's ane here that can think for ye better than ye can do for yourself!" She then proceeded to tell Jenny that she was "a gilaiket gigglet," and "a careless hempie;" that "the sowens had not been sweetened often enough;" that "they had not been properly boiled;" and that a great number of other things had not been done as they ought to have been; and finally, the trustless maiden was told that "she would tak the makin' o' the sowens for that night into her ain hand, and then she would see whether the fau't was in them or in a silly gowk that couldna mak them ready."

Just as the gudewife had arrived at this conclusion, a slight smile, which she could not altogether suppress, was seen to curl Jenny's lip for a moment, as much as to say, "that is exactly what I was wanting."

"What are ye laughin' at, ye senseless silly thing!" inquired the gudewife yet more angrily.

"I'm no laughin'," said Jenny, assuming a most humble and depreciating look; "I was just thinkin' what if the sowens should be as ill wi' your makin' ready as they were wi' mine!"

"Tak' ye nae fear for that," retorted the other; and, as she spoke, she turned slowly on her heel and walked off with an air of great dignity to sweeten the sowens, and take such other precautions as would prevent the possibility of farther complaints. The day passed on; but the gudewife, from having been "spoken to" in the morning, continued to pursue her important avocations with a look and a manner almost as sour as concentrated vinegar. The afternoon, and, latterly, the evening came, and at last the pot with the disputed sowens was put upon the fire. As it approached the boiling point, Jenny, who hitherto had been in high spirits, began to exhibit a degree of restlessness in her motions, and a sort of anxiety in her look, as if she had involved herself in a labyrinth, the end of which she could not exactly see, or rather as if she had undertaken some task, for the accomplishment of which she now began to doubt her own abilities. Being relieved from part of her usual work by the operations of her mistress, she had time to go frequently to the door. On these occasions she never failed to look eagerly around, like one whose only hope rested upon the occurrence of some chance event which still kept aloof. Once or twice she seemed to be revolving matters of high import in her own mind, as though she would have gladly accomplished her purpose, whatever it might be, without the precarious aid of fortune. But while yet in what appeared to be only the middle of one of those fits of musing, her eye brightened all at once, and she came running in, exclaiming at the same instant, "Eh, there's a beggar wife glowrin' in at the hen-house door!"

"The hen-house, did ye say!" inquired the gudewife, with a tone which bespoke some interest. "I maun see after that, for baith Tappy an' Spreckly's eggs are i' the nest yet." And thereupon she laid the stick, with which she stood prepared to stir the sowens as soon as they should begin to boil, across the pot,

\* A stick used in this piece of cottage cookery.

and hastened to the door. The moment she had done so, Jenny darted to the fire with the quickness of lightning, and taking from her bosom a paper containing some small pieces of a whitish semi-transparent substance, she dashed them into the pot, and with one dexterous and noiseless movement of the stick, she sent the whole to the bottom, or at least out of sight; and almost in the twinkling of an eye she was again engaged in her former occupation, which chanced to be that of sweeping the house.

The gudewife, on the other hand, who had really felt some anxiety for the safety of her eggs, no sooner saw that these were out of danger, than her inclination for scolding and grumbling returned with all its force. "Na, na," she began, as she re-entered the house, "the hen-house door is steekit as firm as it used to be, an' naebodie glowrin' in at it; but ill doers are aye ill dreadsers. The beggar wife, poor body, I see warrant, is as honest as ye are, if no the honestest o' the twa; and sae she sall get a gude alms when she comes in." By this time the mendicant had lifted the latch, and now stood in the doorway, presenting her meal-pock as a silent indication of what she wanted. "I say, Jenny," resumed the former speaker, "gae awa' an' gie the honest woman a handfu' o' meal and a piece bread, for I canna leave the sowens to rin here an' there, as ye would do, an' hae them mismade ower again."

The word sowens seemed to produce a powerful effect upon the senses of the beggar-wife. She looked longingly towards the fire, and, as she was securing the benefactions already destined for her—"May the Lord bless you an' your's," she began; "an' may ye aye hae the fu' hand and the willin' heart, an' aye be ready to supply the wants o' the poor an' the needy. But, dear me, I dinna ken what way it is—the smell o' your sowens is gaun about my very heart; an' oh, gudewife, if ye would only gie me a spoonfu', I'm sure they would do me gude!"

Here, be it remarked, that the liberality of the gudewife had flowed, in part, from mixed motives. It was certainly as much out of a wish to have an opportunity of contradicting, and still farther lecturing Jenny, as out of pure benevolence, that she had expressed herself so favourably respecting the poor mendicant. This wish had been already so far gratified, though it had perhaps led her into the mistake of ordering the additional "piece bread"—a thing which, when she began to reflect upon it, might be a new source of vexation. Be the matter as it may, from her being still in the mood for lecturing, there was little safety for any one who might chance to be near, and it so happened that the beggar-wife now came in for her share.

"Gae awa', ye nasty mislead' unconscionable body!" she began. "There are some folk that could tak a' I have in my house, and look for mair when that was done, and it seems ye are ane o' them. Ye've gotten a handfu' o' as gude meal as ever was mout'ered by a rascal o' a miller, and I saw that little-worth randy gie ye mair than half a peas-bannock into the bargain—my certy, it sets ye weel to seek sowens! But if what ye've gotten already dinna please ye, ye sall get nae mair here the night; sae ye can e'en tak the road. A spoonfu' o' sowens! that would be it, indeed!" As she concluded, she proceeded to stir with redoubled vigour the contents of the pot, which, notwithstanding her most strenuous efforts, now threatened to boil over; while the poor beggar, satisfied that she had nothing more to expect, turned and left the house, muttering something about "the hard-hearted never thriving."

Jenny, who now seemed glad of any excuse for going abroad, took up the water-pitchers, though they were scarcely half empty, and followed her out, with the intention of going to the well; but she had hardly got three steps beyond the door, when the gudewife was heard calling after her in the most authoritative manner—"Jenny, whar are ye! D'ye hear, Jenny! I say, bring me the laidle an' the herd-laddie's plate—haste ye, lassie; haste ye, or the sowens will be ower the head o' the pat, an' a' i' the fire, in spite o' my neck!"

The "laidle and the herd-laddie's plate" were brought, and the latter was filled to the brim with all possible dispatch; but scarcely a minute had elapsed, when a farther diminution of the still-increasing contents of the pot appeared to be indispensable. The "haufflin's" plate was brought next, and then the barnman's, and both were filled; but still nothing appeared to have been effected in the way of quieting the ferment in the pot, or rather in providing room for it to exhaust itself in. The mysterious sowens continued to bubble up, and to rise higher and higher every moment, till, at the end of a few seconds more, they seemed fairly preparing to make their escape in a body from the cast-iron utensil which contained them.

"What can all the sowens!" at last exclaimed the gudewife, in a tone of evident perplexity; "a' the things that ever I saw, I never saw the like o' this!"

"They're witched, I see warrant ye!" was Jenny's reply. "Did ye no hear what the beggar-wife said about flytin' folk never thrivin'!" In using the word "flytin'," Jenny no doubt gave the old mendicant's half-uttered expressions a turn to suit her own purpose, but her mistress was not in a state to detect flaws of the kind. The single disyllable "witched" seemed all at once to have thrown the whole of her thoughts into a new and still more distressing channel.

"Lord hae mercy on us!" she again exclaimed, in

a tone which was certainly meant for that of the most fervent devotion. "Can that be possible; and yet it's ower true; for only look at that!" As she uttered the last words, she pointed with one hand to the sowens, which she was in vain endeavouring to keep within bounds with the other; and then, "Rin, lassie, rin," she continued, and bring a' the dishes ye can lay your hands on, for the like o' this was never seen in a Christian land! Bring dishes, did I say? Na, rather rin after that beggar-wife; rin what ye can rin, an' tell her to come back, an' she sall get her kytefu' o' sowens, an' as muckle sweet milk as she can sup, an' a flour-scone, an' a whang o' cheese, an' a penny-piece into the bargain, if she'll only lift that awfu' cantrip that she's laid upon my gude sowens—rin, lassie, rin!"

In obedience to these commands, so imperatively uttered, Jenny did go out; but she soon returned to assure her mistress that "she need not rin after the beggar-wife, for by this time she was by the Bickerstane, and out o' sight;" though, as the girl afterwards confessed, the mendicant was not "a stane-cast beyond the yard-dyke."

"By the Bickerstane, said ye!" ejaculated the gudewife, wringing her hands, and now in greater perplexity than ever, her last resource and her last ray of hope having both failed. "Lord preserve me!" she proceeded; "what are we to do now! But I can stand this nae langer!" With these words she dropped the stick, hastened to the spence, or inner apartment, and threw herself upon her bed in an agony of despair.

When she had left the kitchen, Jenny's first proceeding was to lift the bewitched sowens from the fire, and carry them to the door, where a cool breeze which chanced to be blowing proved more effectual in allaying their turbulence than all the remedies which hitherto had been tried. In short, the free breath of heaven seemed almost instantaneously to dissolve the spell; for the contents of the pot immediately began to subside, and in a very few minutes they had settled down into their natural dimensions. She then took that portion of them with which the "herd-laddie's plate" had been supplied, and following her mistress into the spence, she inquired what they were to do about the men's supper, showing her, at the same time, the sowens, which she said were "raw and watery, and ill-tasted, and no fit for folk's meat."

"Do about the men's supper, said ye!" maundered out the crest-fallen gudewife. "Oh, do ony thing ye like! Gie them bread an' cheese, or bread an' butter, or ony ither thing that's in the house—gie them the ream to lick, if ye like; but dinna torment me, for I'll no be lang in this world! Oh, if the gudeman were only come hame to gang for the minister!"

"Better mak parritch," said Jenny, affecting a degree of sympathy for her mistress which she really did not feel. "It's an awfu' heart to be sure, but folk maun neither tyne heart nor let working men want meat, though a paifu' o' sowens should be bewitched." She then proceeded to comfort and coax the desponding gudewife in the best manner she could, but the only reply which she could get from her was, "Oh, I'll no be lang in this world!" or "Oh, if the gudeman were only come hame to gang for the minister!"

Finding that nothing else would do, Jenny did at last "like" to "mak parritch," and by bringing every agency which could possibly forward the operation into play, she had them ready by the time the men returned from the labours of the day.

"My certy, Jenny," whispered the individual with whom she had taken the bet, "ye have gotten parritch, and that a night earlier than ye promised; but how in this wide world did ye manage the matter?"

"Mind ye're to gie me my ribbon in Martinmas market," was Jenny's reply; "and if ye speer then I'll maybe tell ye; but as lang as I'm here ye maun just be content wi' the parritch without kennin' how ye cam to get them; for I can keep a secret as weel as my neighbours when it concerns myself."

When Martinmas market came round, and Jenny left the place, her year having then expired, the same question was repeated by the same individual, and the answer to it was brief. "Twa or three little bits of alum," said Jenny, "thrown into the pat as it was coming to the boil, witched the sowens, and did the job; and now ye ken the hale affair."

"That was a contrivance, indeed," rejoined the querist; "but what, if I may speer, could put sic an invention in your head?"

"The History of John Cheap, the Chapman," said the other, in reply; "he dressed a greedy gudewife the same gate, and I thought I nicht e'en profit by his example. So ye see clever folk can gather sense whar fools, like you, get naething."

We have only to add, that the gudewife of Burnside, after ailing for several days, did at last recover from the effects of the fright occasioned by the supposed witch. But ever after, if a beggar-wife chanced to come in when sowens were upon the fire, she was careful to offer her a portion of them; and though she could not entirely refrain from scolding, it was observed that her serving-maids really suffered less from this source of annoyance afterwards. Her good opinion of herself, too, appeared to be somewhat diminished. To her dying day, however, she continued to believe firmly that the sowens had been bewitched by the beggar-wife; and frequently told the story in the most imposing manner among her acquaintances,



till in the end it came to be regarded as one of the most authentic evidences then to be met with in support of the popular belief in witchcraft.

#### NEW AND IMPORTANT DISCOVERY IN CHEMISTRY.

IN no science has the progress of modern discovery been more rapid than in chemistry. Scarcely fifty years have elapsed since it was merely a chaos of facts, unconnected by any known general law, with no prominent beacon light to guide the experimenter on his obscure way. Dalton's discovery of the atomic theory, by showing that all chemical compounds consist of the union of definite particles of matter, was the first great step in modern chemistry, as it showed that every chemical combination was governed by fixed laws, which admitted of no deviation. In analysing substances, it has been found by modern chemists that all are resolvable into about fifty-four, which defy further analysis or decomposition, and have therefore been called *simple bodies*, and presumed to be the constituent elements of all natural existences, animate as well as inanimate. The importance of these simple bodies in modern chemistry is of course great, and even to the most ignorant person it must be curious to know that the supposed elements of nature are fifty-four in number, forty-two being metals, four gases, and the remaining eight of no recognised class. Many chemists, however, have surmised that, after all, even these bodies may be compound, and that the real natural elements are much fewer in number. This opinion was founded merely upon theoretical grounds, and one of the reasons that led to it was, that when seeds were planted in pure silex (the dust of a substance of the character of flint) and watered with distilled water, the plants were nevertheless found, when reduced to ashes, to contain some of the metallic oxides. Here the difficulty was to say whence came those traces of metal, seeing that neither the silex, the water, nor the atmosphere, could be presumed to contain it. Science may be said to have been in expectancy on this subject for several years. At length, it seems likely that we are on the eve of a great discovery respecting the simple bodies—one which promises results of the greatest importance, and must quickly be heard of in every corner of the civilised world. The investigator to whom it seems likely that the world will have to acknowledge this obligation, is a young physician of Edinburgh, Dr Samuel Brown. He has been pursuing his experiments for a considerable time under the immediate surveillance of Dr Christison, the distinguished Professor of Materia Medica in the University of Edinburgh; and he has already read two papers on the subject before our Royal Society. These two papers have just appeared in the Transactions of the Society, and furnish the materials of the following notice.

There are several bodies which are composed of precisely the same chemical elements, and which contain these elements in the same quantity. Such bodies are termed *isomerie*. Their constituent parts are the same, but they may nevertheless be very different in all mechanical and chemical properties. *Cyanogen* and *paracyanogen* are two such bodies. They are isomerie; they are both compounds of nitrogen and carbon; and both contain one part of nitrogen united with two parts of carbon. But cyanogen is a gas, whereas paracyanogen is a solid; and thus, though composed of the same elements, carbon and nitrogen, they differ very widely in their mechanical and chemical attributes. The difference is owing to the arrangement of the atoms. In cyanogen, one atom of nitrogen appears to combine with two atoms of carbon, to form one atom of cyanogen; while in paracyanogen two atoms of nitrogen unite with four atoms of carbon to form one of paracyanogen.

Paracyanogen is very easily prepared from the cyanide of mercury, by exposing this salt for a short time to the action of a gentle red heat, in tubes of glass or iron. The mouth of the tube is closed with stucco, through the pores of which the mercury escapes, while the cyanogen is transformed into paracyanogen. If paracyanogen, prepared in this way, be exposed, in shut vessels of porcelain or glass, to the action of a strong white heat for some hours, or to a more moderate degree of heat for some days, a very startling effect is produced, for the nitrogen of the paracyanogen is expelled, whilst the carbon is transformed into another, and to appearance totally different body—*SILICON*. Repeated and varied experiments, conducted in vessels of different materials, and at different degrees of heat, constantly yielded the same results: the carbon had disappeared, and in its place was found a body possessing all the properties of silicon. This is a discovery which must be attended with the most astonishing consequences. It shakes from their very foundation the whole of our present chemical theories, and would seem to indicate that carbon and silicon, instead of being simple bodies, as has hitherto been imagined, are isomerie, and compounds of some yet unknown radical. Following out

this theory, it becomes probable that there are very few simple bodies, possibly only one, from which all other bodies are formed, their different chemical and mechanical qualities being owing merely to the different aggregation of their atoms.

#### FISHING COMMUNITIES.

THE condition of the fisher population, compared with that of other sections of society, is not peculiar to Great Britain, but is a peculiarity to be found in every civilised nation where distinct communities of fishermen exist. It is generally supposed, by those who live near such communities, that they are a peculiar race, or have descended from some band of foreigners whom accident, at a remote period, had brought to the spot. For such notions there is no ground whatever, except the peculiar manners and mental capabilities of the fisher population; and for these a more satisfactory explanation may be easily obtained. The localities of these communities are in general far apart from the rest of the world. They in general not only present a distinct and isolated group of huts, nets, boats, and dirty brats, but also an isolated community of feeling, interest, and social dependence. They have too few dependent connexions with the active and general mass of society, to be sufficiently affected either by its physical or mental progression. These do not sufficiently endanger their interests, so as to act as stimulants to new and more enlarged exertions; and it is a well-known fact, that endangered interests is one of the most powerful propellers to mental exertion and improvement that exist. Necessity is the mother of invention, and invention is the element of social progression and social improvement. Endanger the resources of any individual by invention, and you thereby create the most powerful stimulant to mental exertion on the individual to invent you out in return. The same thing holds good with nations. What has more powerfully contributed to so many excellent and ingenious mechanical inventions in the manufactures of this country, than the competition she has experienced from other nations, and which her children experience from each other. But no invention or improvement in mechanics, morals, or education, seems in the least to affect the independent communities of fishers; and hence they remain quite contented as they are and have been. Their trade is sure, amidst the interminable changes of habits and tastes; man in all ages has admitted their produce to his table, and it is highly probable will continue to do so; nor, in all the changes that may be looked for, can we imagine any which will supersede the manual toil of the fisherman. Again, the very nature of a fisherman's occupation is calculated to lull to sleep the intellectual energies of his mind. He lies at ease in his hut, or stretched before its door; he sails and rides in his boat; he pulls in, or launches out his nets; and all this with one-half his mental faculties asleep. Amongst their social regulations we find one powerful element towards the deterioration of the mental powers, and that is their clannishness. Their communities are monopolies of individuals. They give the very opposite to an encouragement for strangers to come amongst them. They invariably marry amongst each other; and in many of their communities each may trace his well-known relation to every other, from the lowest degree of cousin to the highest. This is a practice well known to tend to the deterioration of at least the mental powers, and might be sufficient in itself to account for the fact, that we have scarcely any instance of individual minds amongst the fisher communities rising to superiority in any department of intellectual exertion. Another circumstance unfavourable to the fishing people is the early occupation given to the children, in gathering bait, mending-nets, and other arrangements, whereby they are precluded from a regular attendance at school. The general result is, that low intellectual condition, and that primitive rudeness of manners, which mark the people of fishing villages in every part of the world. Their inferiority is perhaps of a more decided character than is generally supposed. We have been assured that the heads of the fishermen of a series of villages on the east coast of Ross-shire, are so much less than those of their neighbours, that the shopkeepers of the adjacent towns are accustomed to order boys' hats on purpose for them. This inferiority of organisation is probably the result of the comparative inactivity of the intellectual powers of these fishermen, operating during a long succession of generations.

What useful reflections does this explanation of the fisher communities offer to a practical mind! It shows the beneficial tendencies of such elements in society as competition, necessity, and universal dependence—one nation, community, and individual, with other nations, communities, and individuals—the interests, progression, and condition of one, affecting and pushing on the interests and progression of others. The one cannot, even if it were inclined, fold its arms, lull to repose its physical and intellectual energies, and rest contented, without endangering its interests, nay, its very existence. If the lazy Turk do not shake himself up, and think upon something else than his ease and his enjoyments, his nation will assuredly become the unresisting prey of more active powers. These speculations furnish a broad hint to those who dream of isolated communities working together on the co-operative principle, showing that, wanting as they are in the grand stimulating element, such schemes,

if fully carried out, would inevitably tend to produce languor and deterioration, instead of the substantial fruits expected from them.

Fisher communities may be considered as the landmarks of bygone ages. By them society can have a kind of comparison of the progress it has made in all the various branches of human knowledge. It may be a somewhat curious question to answer, whether fishermen will continue as they are, or advance along with society, although a good way behind. It appears to us highly improbable that they will ever overtake society; they have too few dependent interests, and their occupation is unfit for calling out energetic efforts: nevertheless, we are disposed to believe they will follow society, although far in the rear. The small dependence and communication they have with general society ensures this. If they do not feel it their interest to do so, they may by and bye feel it a pleasure and pride to imitate. For instance, the great efforts which are now making to get every youth educated, tend to create a desire on the part of the fisherman to have a little education for his family also; this, of itself, if it were becoming general, would introduce the elements of change amongst them, and assist materially their future improvement.

#### PETRARCH AND LAURA.

THE names of Petrarch and Laura have acquired a greater degree of celebrity, perhaps, than those of any other individuals mentioned in literary history. The life-long devotion of the poet to the object of his affection, has become a proverb in the annals of sentimental love. While we cannot help thinking that Petrarch spent far too much of his time and existence in moaning over the unavoidable disappointments attending a misplaced attachment, at the same time the circumstances of his case have become, through the influence of his genius, so famous and interesting, that we believe almost every one of our readers will feel gratified by having the true incidents of the story laid before them. Mr Campbell's new work on the career of the Italian poet affords us an apt opportunity for doing this.\*

The family of Francesco Petrarca or Petrarch was originally of Florence, but his father was compelled, by political disturbances, to fly to the town of Arezzo, in Tuscany, where, on the 20th of July 1304, the future poet was born. Not being included in the sentence of exile virtually pronounced against her husband, Eletta, the mother of Francesco, took up her abode at Ancisa, fourteen miles from Florence, and there was her son nurtured in infancy. His parents afterwards settled for a time at Avignon. While very young, Petrarch manifested extraordinary sensibility to the charms of nature, and a spot which he afterwards celebrated caught his fancy in mere boyhood. "One day, when he was at the latter residence, a party was made up to see the Fountain of Vaucluse, a few leagues from Avignon. The little Francesco had no sooner arrived at the lovely landscape than he was struck with its beauties, and exclaimed, 'Here, now, is a retirement suited to my taste, and preferable, in my eyes, to the greatest and most splendid cities.'"

The father of the poet wished to make him a lawyer, but the boy showed an irradicable predilection for classical literature of a general kind, which was then much neglected, and the taste for which Petrarch did so much in after years to revive. The father even journeyed purposely to Bologna, at the schools of which Petrarch had been placed, in order to alter the course of his son's studies. "Petrarch, guessing at the motive of his arrival, hid the copies of Cicero, Virgil, and some other authors, which composed his small library, and to purchase which he had deprived himself of almost the necessities of life. His father, however, soon discovered the place of their concealment, and threw them into the fire. Petrarch exhibited as much feeling of agony as if he had been himself the martyr of his father's resentment. But the parent was so much affected by his son's tears, that he rescued from the flames Cicero and Virgil, and, presenting them to Petrarch, he said, 'Virgil will console you for the loss of your other manuscripts, and Cicero will prepare you for the study of the law.'"

Not having any taste for the law, and having acquired the friendship of one of the members of the Colonna family, who had great interest in the church, Petrarch, at the age of twenty-two, so far adopted the clerical profession as to submit to the tonsure. But he proceeded no farther in his theological career, his tendencies towards a literary life being marked and overpowering. Besides, he was assailed at a very early period by that one absorbing passion which kept him in bonds through life. Mr Campbell tells the history of this attachment in a pleasing and downright way. "He had nearly finished his twenty-third year without having ever seriously known the passion of love. In that year he first saw Laura. Concerning this lady, at one time, when no life of Petrarch had been yet written that was not crude and inaccurate, his biographers launched into the wildest speculations. One author considered her as an allegorical being; another discovered her to be a type of the Virgin Mary; another thought her an allegory of poetry and repentance. Some denied even her allegorical exist-

\* Life of Petrarch, by Thomas Campbell, Esq. H. Colburn, London: 1841.



ance, and deemed her a mere phantom beauty, with which the poet had fallen in love, like Pygmalion with the work of his own creation. All these caprices about Laura's history have been long since dissipated, though the principal facts respecting her were never distinctly verified, till De Sade, her own descendant, wrote his memoirs of the Life of Petrarch.

Petrarch himself relates that in 1327, exactly at the first hour of the 6th of April, he first beheld Laura in the church of St Clara of Avignon, where neither the sacredness of the place nor the solemnity of the day, could prevent him from being smitten for life with human love. In that fatal hour he saw a lady, a little younger than himself, in a green mantle sprinkled with violets, on which her golden hair fell plaited in tresses. She was distinguished from all others by her proud and delicate carriage. The impression which she made on his heart was sudden, yet it was never effaced. Laura, descended from a family of ancient and noble extraction, was the daughter of Audibert de Noves, a Provençal nobleman, by his wife Eamesenda. She was born at Avignon, probably in 1308. She had a considerable fortune, and was married in 1325 to Hugh de Sade.\* Laura was thus, when first seen by Petrarch, a married woman; and, though well aware of this fact, the monomaniacal poet, for he can be called nothing else, continued ever after to entertain an affection for the lady, who, to her credit, appears to have uniformly laughed at, or been vexed with, the ridiculousness of the passion; moreover, although her husband was a bad-tempered man, she lived happily and respectfully with him, and was the mother of a large family.

It is impossible to speak with any degree of patience of the sentimental frenzy which affected Petrarch from this unfortunate cause, and the best that can be said of it is, that his reason was in some sort upset, and unable to combat the delusive fancy which had taken possession of him. We are informed by his biographers, that he really was aware of his folly, and made strong exertions to divert his imagination into a new channel. He travelled for some years from place to place, varying the scene to himself, and gathering all the while additional knowledge. The patronage of the Colonna family yielded him in part the means for most of these journeys, and he inherited some considerable property from his parents. In the mean time, he formed the acquaintance of many men of letters at Avignon and elsewhere, and became himself distinguished by the publication of sonnets, chiefly on the subject of his unfortunate passion. At length he resolved to settle in retirement, and chose Vaucluse as the spot best fitted for his purpose. "Vaucluse (says Mr Campbell), or Vallis Clausa, the shut-up valley, is a most beautiful spot, watered by the windings of the Sorgue. It is indeed one of the loveliest seclusions in the world. It terminates in a semicircle of rocks of stupendous height, that seem to have been hewn down perpendicularly. At the head and centre of the vast amphitheatre, and at the foot of one of its enormous rocks, there is a cavern of proportional size, hollowed out by the hand of nature. Its opening is an arch sixty feet high; but it is a double cavern, there being an interior one with an entrance thirty feet high. In the midst of these there is an oval basin, having eighteen fathoms for its longest diameter, and from this basin rises the copious stream which forms the Sorgue. The surface of the fountain is black, an appearance produced by its depth, from the darkness of the rocks and the obscurity of the cavern, for, on being brought to light, nothing can be clearer than its water."

Resolving to fix his residence here, Petrarch bought a little cottage and an adjoining field, and repaired to Vaucluse with no other companions than his books. To this day the ruins of a small house are shown at Vaucluse, which tradition says was his habitation. If his object was to forget Laura, the composition of sonnets upon her in this hermitage was unlikely to be an antidote to his recollections. It would seem as if he meant to cherish rather than to get rid of his love. But if he nursed his passion, it was a dry-nursing, for he led a lonely, ascetic, and, if it were not for his studies, we might say a savage life. In one of his letters, written not long after his settling at Vaucluse, he says, "As to my dress, there is an entire change; you would take me for a labourer or a shepherd. My mansion resembles that of Cato or Fabricius. My whole household establishment consists of myself, my old fisherman and his wife, and a dog. My fisherman's cottage is contiguous to mine; when I want him I call—when I no longer need him, he returns to his cottage. I have made two gardens that please me wonderfully. I do not think they are to be equalled in all the world."

One of these gardens is shady, formed for contemplation, and sacred to Apollo. It overhangs the source of the river, and is terminated by rocks, and by places accessible only to birds. The other is nearer my cottage, of an aspect less severe, and devoted to Bacchus; and, what is extremely singular, it is in the midst of a rapid river. The approach to it is over a bridge of rocks, and there is a natural grotto under the rocks, which gives them the appearance of a rustic bridge. Into this grotto the rays of the sun never penetrate. I am confident that it much resembles the place where Cicero sometimes went to declaim. It invites to study. Hither I retreat during the noontide hours; my mornings are engaged upon the hills, or in the garden sacred to Apollo. Here I would most willingly pass my days, were I not too near Avignon, and too far from Italy.

For why should I conceal this weakness of my soul! I love Italy, and I hate Avignon. The pestilential influence of this horrid place empisons the pure air of Vaucluse, and will compel me to quit my retirement."

At this spot Petrarch composed the greater part of his poetry, both in his native (Italian) tongue, and in Latin. Here he also wrote his books on *Solitude*, and on *Religious Tranquillity*; and his long poem, entitled *Africa*, on which he placed a value not admitted by the world. These productions, given to the public from time to time, gained him a high degree of literary reputation; and ultimately the highest honour that could be conferred on any poet was offered to him, and accepted. It had been the custom to crown eminent poets with a laurel chaplet in the capitol of Rome. Thither, to receive that distinction, Petrarch went. The scene of the coronation was a grand one. "The morning (says Mr Campbell) of the 8th of April, 1341, was ushered in by the sound of trumpets; and the people, ever fond of a show, came from all quarters to see the ceremony. Twelve youths, selected from the best families of Rome, and clothed in scarlet, opened the procession, repeating, as they went, some verses composed by the poet in honour of the Roman people. They were followed by six citizens of Rome clothed in green, and bearing crowns wreathed with different flowers. Petrarch walked in the midst of them; after him came the senator, accompanied by the first men of the council. The streets were strewn with flowers, and the windows filled with ladies dressed in the most splendid manner, who showered perfumed waters profusely on the poet. He all the time wore the robe that had been presented to him by the King of Naples. When they reached the capitol, the trumpets were silent, and Petrarch, having made a short speech, in which he quoted a verse from Virgil, cried out three times, 'Long live the Roman people! long live the senators! may God preserve their liberty!' At the conclusion of these words he knelt before the senator Orso, who, taking a crown of laurel from his own head, placed it on that of Petrarch, saying, 'This crown is the reward of virtue.' The poet then repeated a sonnet in praise of the ancient Romans. The people testified their approbation by shouts of applause, crying, 'Long flourish the capitol and the poet!' The friends of Petrarch shed tears of joy, and Stefano Colonna, his favourite hero, addressed the assembly in his honour."

Subsequently, Petrarch spent less of his time at Vaucluse; and Rome, Milan, Parma, Padua, Mantua, and other places, were occasionally honoured by his residence. Every where he met with the warmest reception. He attained high favour with several successive popes, and not only received various offices in the church, but fulfilled several important embassies, chiefly between the Italian courts. Ultimately, he settled in the villa of Arquà, near Padua, where he died, in consequence of an apoplectic fit, on the night of July 18, 1374. His decease seemed to have been attended with no pain or struggles. He was found in the morning with his head resting on a book, and life extinct. Laura, whom he loved with the same ardour throughout his whole life, preceded him in the path to the tomb. She died of the plague on the 1st of April 1348.

Mr Campbell sums up the character of Petrarch in a manner very favourable, on the whole, to the subject of his remarks. The aid which he gave to the revival of learning, swamped previously in the darkness of the middle ages, is perhaps his greatest merit. His poetry, making allowance for the comparative weakness of the feeling to which it owes its peculiar tone, is full of imagination and reflective force. "So strong a regard for Petrarch is rooted in the mind of Italy, that his renown has grown up like an oak which has reached maturity amidst the storms of ages, and fears not decay from revolving centuries." A more just perception, as it appears to us, of his merits and demerits, is to be found in Miss Catherine Taylor's Letters from Italy, lately published. "I cannot, however, (observes that lady) in spite of the praise which is universally bestowed on Petrarch, grant him a place in my admiration beside Dante. Ugo Foscolo, in his Essays on Petrarch, beautifully contrasts these two poets. He speaks of Dante as the faithful historian of the manners of his age, the acute observer of character, the stern monitor of wrong, the fearless champion of right, the poet not of one nation or of one sentiment, but of all nations and of every emotion of the human heart; whilst Petrarch, entirely absorbed by his passion for Laura, seeing every thing through the medium of this one feeling, was selfish, and a prey to a morbid sensibility, which rendered him an indolent spectator of the scenes of stirring interest which surrounded him. Listless and discontented, he wandered from place to place; when in Avignon he pined for the solitude of Vaucluse, and when alone there he was still a miserable and restless being. If to spend a life in melancholy repinings and indolent disquietude be virtue, then was Petrarch virtuous; but if, as I believe, it consists in the performance of duty, to the forgetfulness of self, even in spite of personal suffering, making all tend to the benefit of others, then must I think Petrarch deficient in the most admirable qualities of man. His sonnets are wonderful, his language pure and graceful, but the sentiments they contain are little calculated to benefit mankind. Professing to be an ardent lover of his country, too, he could quietly sit by when Rimini was struggling for liberty,

and 'Rome was torn to pieces and all Italy disfigured. He says, 'Others may contribute their strength, their riches, their power, or their counsel—I can offer nothing but tears.' The vanity which Petrarch evinced, too, on every occasion, does not consist with a great mind; no one was more open to flattery, or more delighted by the notice of the great, than he was, repaying it with fulsome, I had almost said servile, adulation."

These are circumstances which, in the opinion of many, must greatly lessen respect for the character of this eminent Italian poet.

#### CURIOUS TABLEAU OF JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

THE *Westminster Review* (No 70, newly published) gives a lively and interesting paper on Egyptian antiquities, and particularly regarding those relics of the arts and memorials of the customs of ancient Egypt which have been amassed in the British Museum. The writer notices one monument of a most remarkable kind:—"A grand tableau, advertising to the important event of the arrival of Joseph's brethren in Egypt, discovered among the excavated tombs of Beni-Hasan (not very distant from Cairo), is perhaps the most remarkable acquisition of modern Egyptian discovery. Some doubts have been expressed by Egyptian hieroglyphists, and among the rest by Rosellini and Sir J. G. Wilkinson, whether the tableau in effect does or does not represent the arrival of Joseph's brethren in Egypt. But the force of those doubts will be weakened when we state that some who were sceptical, now waver in their opinion, while others have arrived at an opposite conclusion."

The occasion of those doubts was the fact, that the era of the arrival in the reign of Osirtesen did not correspond with favourite or preconceived chronological systems. Any dispassionate person, however, who surveys the tableau in association with the epoch, and with other monuments where the Jews appear, will, we are assured, come to the inference that it does represent the arrival of Joseph's brethren in Egypt, and their introduction by Joseph in person, acting as secretary of state to a viceroy of the reigning sovereign, in whose tomb the tableau is found. We will briefly explain its details.

A royal scribe, or secretary of state, whose name has been read phonetically *Nosuf* and *Junuf*, followed by the jailor Roti, is introducing to a viceroy of Osirtesen (which fixes the epoch at 1725 B.C., and about six generations before the commencement of the eighteenth dynasty) ten Hebrews, clearly identified by their physiognomies and costume, and one lad; making eleven males altogether, accompanied by females, possibly the wives of the male personages, two children, and by attendants, to the amount of thirty-seven.

The viceroy of Osirtesen, who is represented as standing, in honour of the superior rank of the royal scribe, is omitted by Rosellini, who has also, to our great regret, omitted several other figures, including one styled 'the master of the house,' two of the Hebrews, and the whole of the attendants.

The secretary of state, wearing the large wig peculiar to the aristocracy, similar to the specimen in the British Museum, displays a scroll, in which is written the arrival of these strangers, described as 'bond slaves,' in the sixth year of Osirtesen.

It is obvious that they are Hebrews who have just crossed the desert. They are accompanied by two asses of the desert, panniered and covered with a peculiarly ornamented housing, one of which conveys two children (possibly those of Judah) and the arms of the party, and both the others the leather water-bottles, exactly such as are carried now by camels and by asses in crossing the desert. They bring with them presents to their great host, such as are recommended by Jacob in the Mosaic account of the arrival of Joseph's brethren.\* One carries and performs on a lyre, made after the primitive Greek fashion, which has been by antiquarians identified with the Jewish 'Chinnor,' derived perhaps from Jubal, the lyre's scriptural inventor; two other of the brothers lead animals, which sufficiently indicate their Judean locality, the antelope and the ibex of Lebanon. The men are clad in many-coloured woollen tunics, wear the Greek sandal, and are well armed with clubs, spears, and bows and arrows. Two carry the desert water-bottles slung over their shoulders.† The females, whose resemblance would seem to indicate that they are sisters, and at all events members of one and the same family, wear tunics of the same primitive character, dyed with a peculiar pattern of stripes, intermixed with wavy lines, and short leather boots (*cothurni*), which are never worn by the Egyptian females.

These are the main points of the tableau. The inquiring reader may discover others equally curious;

\* "And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so, do this; take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds."—Gen. 43, ii.

† These are, in fact, the bottles mentioned in Scripture, the references to which are unintelligible, if associated (as they vulgarly are) with glass bottles. The ancient Jewish bottles were bags, made of goats' or other wild beasts' skins, with the hair on the inside, well sewed and pitched together, an aperture in one of the animal's paws serving for the mouth of the vessel. Bottles of this kind are mentioned in Scripture, and were used for carrying water through the deserts of Arabia and other countries, where springs and streams are scarce. The Arabs of the present day keep their water, milk, and other liquors, in such bottles as these, which they sling about their necks like two of the Jewish personages in the tableau.



and he will not fail, we are satisfied, comparing all its details together, and connecting it with the epoch and with the name of the Pharaoh indicated on the scroll presented by the introducing secretary to the chief personage, to come to the conclusion that it is a pictorial representation of the arrival of Benjamin with his ten brethren in Egypt, as recorded in the Book of Genesis. The Jewish lad, the number of ten Jewish brethren with him, the high designation of the introducing personage, namely, that of a 'Prince Secretary of State' under the reigning Pharaoh, their immediate arrival from the desert, the Judean presents they bring, the fact of the tenant of the tomb being governor of the district in the neighbourhood of Goshen, where the Jews afterwards settled, and finally, the name of the royal secretary written 'JUSUR,' the present eastern name for Joseph, all point with a converging cogency of proof, scarcely admitting of a question, to the same inference, namely, that the tableau records the arrival of Joseph's brethren.

It seems, moreover, to depict a peculiar point of time, namely, when Simeon being liberated from bondage, Joseph is conducting his eleven brethren, including his younger brother Benjamin, and followed by the 'master of his house,' spoken of in Genesis, from the presence of the Pharaoh Osrtesen into the presence of the viceroy of the land of Goshen, where they were about to be settled, and in whose tomb this extraordinary pictorial memorial is found."

#### SOIRÉE TO WORKING PEOPLE BY THEIR EMPLOYERS.

THE editors of this sheet have for three years past given an annual soirée, or temperate evening entertainment, to the working people employed in their printing and publishing office. On the two last occasions, they have published an account of the proceedings in the *Journal*, with a view to inducing other employers to seek by the same means the promotion of a good understanding with those who labour for them. Once more, for similar reasons, they are induced to come in like manner before the public. The soirée of 1841 took place on Monday, the 5th of July, and was thus generally described in the *Witness* (Edinburgh newspaper) of the 7th:—

"On Monday evening the Messrs Chambers gave their fourth annual soirée to their workmen, within their extensive premises in the High Street. The fame of this entertainment has travelled so far, and it is in truth of so pleasing a character, so well fitted to keep up a happy temperament both in masters and men, and, we may add, to shed a humanising and benevolent influence over all who witness it, that we think a slight sketch of the affair would not be unwelcome to those of our readers who have never had the more satisfactory evidence of personal observation. The visitor, after being ushered from the High Street into the premises of the Messrs Chambers, passes into a room surrounded by literally a wall of paper in reams, which he may ascertain afterwards is provision for but two weeks' issue of their enormous circulation. He now descends a flight of wooden stairs, and finds himself in a room, apparently about seventy feet long, which a gentleman, in the course of the evening, not inappropriately compared to the lower deck of a man-of-war. Here are assembled the workmen of the establishment, to the number of eighty, with their wives, and at least an equal number of guests, the ladies being many of them in full dress. The place is crowded with long tables, on which the tea apparatus is placed; and each individual is conducted to a seat, where he finds his own name on a ticket placed beside his tea-cup. The two brothers, the hosts of the entertainment, occupy a table somewhat raised above the rest, at the centre of one of the side walls, with a few of their more distinguished guests seated on each hand. The room is decorated with flowers and evergreens, and flags bearing temperance mottoes are neatly disposed round the walls. The tables are all covered, and at the bottom of each is seated a head of a department in the office. A band of instrumental music, stationed on an elevated platform at one end, plays at intervals during the evening. The bustle of tea and coffee over, and 'God Save the Queen' being sung, all the company standing, the speaking was commenced on this occasion by Mr Robert Chambers, who delivered an address from himself and his brother conjointly."

The following are the principal parts of Mr Robert Chambers's address:—

"This meeting, I need scarcely say, is composed of two distinct portions. First, there are upwards of eighty persons who are employed in this building in various capacities; and, secondly, there is a nearly equal number of persons who have favoured us with their company as guests, and who are pleased to indicate by their so doing, that they feel an interest in the primary object of the meeting. To our esteemed guests, let us address specially what we have to say respecting the persons employed in this establishment. There are, amongst these persons, first the individuals called compositors, who take the literary matter with which we furnish them, and set it up in a typographical form. This is a remarkably respectable class of men, who require for their business a good literary education, and whose personal appearance, as they come and go from this office, is equal to that of any of the middle classes of society. Then there are persons engaged in casting and preparing stereotype plates, a highly

skilled and ingenious class of workmen. Next are the men who superintend the printing-machines, and the steam-engine which drives them. We have, then, a considerable corps of young women, whose business it is to fold and stitch the sheets, and respecting whom we may mention the gratifying fact, that, during all the time they have been in this office, we have never heard an unfavourable word respecting their conduct. A set of clever bookbinders, to finish off our books, completes the class of working men. To go along according to the course pursued by our publications, we finally come to the corps of warehousemen and clerks, who conduct the distributive part of our business, and stand, it may be said, immediately between ourselves and the public. It is surely a fact most worthy of notice, that, amongst the eighty people thus employed, we scarcely ever have a fault to find. There are rules laid down for their guidance, and to these they adhere so well, that we scarcely ever have occasion to express the slightest disapproval. If we were to judge from this establishment, we should be at a loss to account for the dissatisfaction which employers and employed in this busy country so often express with regard to each other. Here all is serenity and peace. Our people are morally as respectable as any people in the country. They do their duty in a quiet steady manner, and live, to all appearance, contentedly on their respective incomes. Surely this is a system of things which might exist elsewhere as well as here. Let men be treated on the principles of justice and benevolence; let their merits and respectability, in their various spheres of duty and usefulness, be acknowledged both by fair wages and by friendly and grateful sentiments on the part of their employers, and we have no doubt (for it is in human nature) that the relation of employer and employed throughout the country would be one in which nothing but harmony and happiness would be known, while the general peace and morality of the empire would be infinitely improved.

We will trouble you, ladies and gentlemen guests, to listen to a few more particulars regarding this establishment—not from any wish to obtain your approbation, but in the hope that a stimulus may be given to good arrangements in other factories. Health, you will all acknowledge, is particularly useful to the working man. It is that on which himself and his family may be said most immediately to depend. How is his health to be preserved, if the workshop is, from peculiarities in its construction, insalubrious? Many masters are ignorant—some are distinctly culpable on this score. There is one trade in London, for which it is thought that heat is useful, to make the work better. The men are accordingly kept in a close warm atmosphere the whole day—and what is the consequence? Few men in that trade are fit for their work after forty-five. This is a monstrous cruelty. We hold that masters are bound by that law which bids us do to others as we would have others do to us, to take quite the contrary course, and provide for the health of their men. Here, at least, a humble effort has been made to follow out the Christian precept, for we have established a means of ventilating the workshops, by which pure air, fit to sustain health, is constantly to be had in every part of them. The men thus enjoy an advantage which many persons living in splendid houses do not enjoy; it is not enjoyed, for instance, by the inmates of a superb club-house built in our city within the last few years. Even the king's palace, so lately as the reign of William IV., required to have an inspection by Dr Arnott, to enable its royal inmates to obtain that article of non-exchangeable value—fresh air. There are people who laugh at science and philosophers; but a little more science in our ordinary economy would save many lives, and prevent many from becoming widows and orphans.

And now, our friends of the workshop and desk, it is proper to say a few words of our guests. We are sure you must join us heartily in appreciating the honour done to our meeting by so many respectable persons. To all of these guests we return cordial thanks for the pleasure of their company. We thank, in a particular manner, those who enjoy distinction on account of their rank and talents; for, when we consider the old-established habits of society, which exercise—and in the main rightly exercise—so strong an influence over us, we cannot but be aware that the obligation conferred upon us to-night by this portion of our guests is one of an extraordinary kind. When we see sitting in the midst of us, happy to partake of the poor man's cup, and share the poor man's joy, one of the judges of the land—men whose function is about the highest now known in Scotland—when we see Sir George Mackenzie, who, in his youth, for the sake of science, voyaged beyond the arctic circle, and has ever since been indefatigable in his efforts in behalf of science and philanthropy; Mr Simpson, the zealous and eloquent advocate of an improved education; Dr Thomas Murray and Mr George Lees, men of the first reputation as lecturers on science; when we further see this goodly array of ladies and gentlemen, all of them of enlightened character, we must surely feel that we are engaged in high and not unholy rites—the sacrifice of artificial distinctions upon the altar of a common humanity. Friends, one and all, it is not to be doubted that there are grounds in human qualifications, attainments, and providential circumstances, for the distinctions which exist in society. Far be it from us to undervalue those distinctions, or to endeavour to flatter the lowly into the idea that they are entitled to take an equal place with the exalted. But how much do

some considerations as to our common nature sink all such distinctions! The same in our frames and minds; the same in our affection for our country, and our admiration of whatever is beautiful, true, and good; the same in all of tears and joy that besets or lightens our path through this subliminary vale; the same in our subjection to one destiny and our hopes of a blessed future, 'where all tears shall be wiped away from all eyes'—are we not of one kindred, and are we not united in the fusion of a heaven-born sympathy, which, notwithstanding accidental obstructions, tends to well forth in bright and copious streams, for ever and ever."

The opening address was answered by one of the readers in the compositor department, Mr Renton, in the following terms:—

"I rise with much pleasure, on behalf of my fellow-workmen and myself, to respond to the kind sentiments which have just been expressed towards us, and to return you our hearty and grateful thanks for all your favours during the year that is past. The important relation subsisting between us—the one party depending for employment upon the application of capital, and more especially upon the intelligence and foresight by which that capital is directed into useful and productive channels; and the other receiving, in the form of labour, that aid by which alone knowledge and wealth can become properly available—is one well calculated, as it appears to us, to awaken and foster on both sides sentiments of kindness and esteem. Unfortunately, however, it is impossible to forget that this relation may subsist, and too frequently has subsisted, without originating any of these kindly feelings; and that mistrust on the one side, indifference on the other, and, it may be, no small amount of ignorance on both sides, have given rise to consequences most painful to contemplate. The history of the practical working of this establishment, however, has abundantly shown that these causes of bitterness have no necessary existence; and that, under the sway of an enlightened benevolence, they may be happily superseded by other and more generous influences. Gentlemen—we would gladly enlarge on this subject, did we not feel that those acts of kindness by which we are most acutely affected are precisely the most difficult to enumerate in mere words. The circumstance of employment for liberal wages is in itself no mean advantage, especially at a period when commercial stagnation has exposed so many of our countrymen to want and destitution. But still stronger claims on our gratitude are found in the unwearied exertions you have made to render that employment regular and constant; in the absence of every thing calculated to irritate or annoy even the humblest among us; in the affability of your general deportment; and in the generous care of our interests and comfort perceptible in all your arrangements. Of your acts of kindness and condescension to individuals it is impossible for us here to speak; though we feel strongly how large a proportion of the attachment with which you are regarded owes its origin to this source. For your continued attention and patronage to the library—which from first to last has been your own gift; and also for the aid you have afforded to the music class, you have our best and warmest thanks. Nor have we been able to regard with indifference the provision you have lately made for the instruction of the young persons in the establishment; and most earnestly do we trust that the conduct of these youths, both here and throughout their future lives, will be such as to show that they have profited by the disinterested kindness thus displayed in their behalf. That these exertions for our benefit have not been wholly unproductive of advantage to our employers, you have yourselves, gentlemen, encouraged us to believe. And while it cannot but be matter of unmingled gratulation to us, that we are thus privileged to participate in the benefits of a better system, we look forward with hopeful confidence to a period, when the wide diffusion of that intelligence, which it is the great object of this establishment to promote, shall cause these benefits to be more extensively appreciated and more generally enjoyed. It is, therefore, as an appeal on behalf of practical benevolence, as well as a convincing demonstration of its effects, that we hail with especial gladness the recurrence of this annual feast. For, need we say, that while thus surrounding your board, and participating in the abundance prepared for us, we cannot regard this meeting as an isolated event—but rather as an evidence of permanent principles of action—as a crowning epoch of innocent enjoyment, at once ending and recommending a whole year of sterling benefactions. An assembly such as this, gentlemen, the result of your own unsollicitous generosity, and dignified by the presence and approbation of so many individuals distinguished by their rank, their talents, and their virtues, is not only a most hopeful indication of the times, but is calculated, we humbly believe, when its objects and proceedings become known, to produce a more important moral influence than a hundred homilies on abstract philanthropy. And though by yourselves the only reward anticipated may have been the contemplation of the happiness now diffused around you, we are surely not too sanguine in anticipating, from the example which it offers, that a higher and more lasting recompense awaits you, in the wide diffusion, among masters and workmen, of that spirit of friendliness and concord which your benevolence has created here.

And now, gentlemen, in offering you our sincere congratulations on the continued and unexampled success of your undertakings, we need not be supposed insensible to the more immediate personal advantages which that prosperity implies. But it is not on such considerations that we are now desirous to speak. The great purpose to which your lives and labours are devoted—the moral and intellectual elevation of the community—is one which gives to this establishment something of a national

\* It may not be superfluous to state that the following speech is printed exactly as written out by Mr Renton.

importance. For, gentlemen, amid the striking discoveries of this inventive era—amid all those valuable adaptations of science to purposes of practical utility by which it has been illustrated—we know none better fitted to arrest the attention of every thinking man—none more important in its bearings on the highest interests of humanity—than that great problem, which, of all other public teachers, you have most successfully solved. This problem—this peculiar necessity of the age—was a *People's Literature*. It was not simply a *cheap literature* that was wanted, though that quality might be indispensable to its diffusion; certainly it was not a literature which should receive its characteristic of popularity by being unfit for the perusal of any man of virtue or good taste. The great difficulty to be surmounted—and it was one not unworthy of the highest intellect—was the diffusion of knowledge in such a form, and of such a character, that, while it was accessible to the humblest, it should not be unworthy of the highest—a literature, which, while it should amuse and instruct the peasant, might not at the same time be valuable to the peer. Such a literature is now doing its great work in society; and, gentlemen, though not unmindful of the exertions of others who have preceded or followed you, we are only repeating the universal impression of the public when we say, that by far the most successful agents in this great moral achievement, have been the honoured individuals who are now presiding at these tables. [Here follow some sentences of a panegyric kind, which, as not necessarily connected with the object of the meeting, we omit.] In conclusion, gentlemen, we cannot doubt of your continued success. We have only now to express our earnest hope, that your lives may be long preserved to continue this good work; and that your exertions may be still more abundantly rewarded, both in the advancement of your own immediate interests, and in the richer harvest of general improvement.

Mr William Chambers replied to the address of Mr Renton in appropriate terms, mentioning that his brother and himself accepted the congratulations of those in their employment with unfeigned pleasure, and were glad to know that their conduct as employers had met approval. The terms of their mutual intercourse, he was also happy to say, had not passed unobserved, and, as he had reason to believe, to the substantial advantage of the working men whom he addressed. Mr Chambers proceeded to explain the great benefits to be derived from the possession of a good character as well as professional skill, and that to secure these benefits to the parties interested, he would preserve the reputation of the establishment by excluding from it all persons likely to infringe on the rules for order and decorum. This was no injustice to any—it was only justice to the respectable class of workmen. Can we doubt, he said, that wherever these things are known, a workman from our establishment will bear that premium which his merits entitle him to? Mr Chambers mentioned some particulars respecting the office and the business conducted in it. There are now four printing machines constantly employed in throwing off the various works published by the copartners; and a fifth is about to be added. Including the London impression of the Journal, the publications of Messrs Chambers are now printed at the rate of about 160,000 sheets weekly, or 8,000,000 per annum [a quantity, it may be added, fully one and a half that of the number of sheets printed by the entire newspaper press of Scotland]. Of a single tract on *Astronomy*, forming the first sheet of the series entitled *Information for the People*, 84,000 had been printed and issued within a few months; showing, in a striking manner, as he thought, the appetite of the people for instruction. Mr Chambers concluded with some general remarks on the remarkable tendency of the age towards moral and intellectual improvement.

Sir George Mackenzie was then pleased to express himself in the following terms:—"I have been able (said that gentleman) to do many things in the course of my life, but there is one thing I never could do—I never could make a speech. But though I cannot speak, I can feel; and I say with perfect sincerity and truth, that I never felt higher enjoyment than that which I have experienced since I sat down at this table. I am old enough to remember the period when the French Revolution broke out, and when in this country there was a great outcry for liberty and equality. These terms were by no means properly understood at that time; and I am not sure whether they are rightly comprehended now; but if any one needs a definition of true, of moral liberty and equality, he has only to look upon the assemblage now before me."

Mr Simpson, who has lent his kind endeavours to entertain each of the three foregoing meetings, spoke on the present occasion as follows:—He delighted again to meet this pattern factory. He had just listened with extreme pleasure to a speech by one of its working men, which in thought, feeling, and composition, he thought could scarcely be surpassed. He was not less delighted to see present as guests men whose talents and virtues had raised them to the highest seats of honour and dignity, condescending—but he recalled the word—*happy* to attend this annual festival. Mr Simpson was sure that he expressed a feeling in which all present participated when he regretted the unavoidable absence of Lords Jeffrey, Cockburn, and Cuninghame. He had been cheered with the hope, also destined to be disappointed, that the name of Abercromby [Lord Dunfermline] would have been added. He could answer for the spirit in which that noble person would have joined this festival; for he was once assured by himself, that, when lending his aid to the mechanics of Chesterfield to form an institution, he met them repeatedly in a place where the only seat for the Speaker of the House of Commons, accustomed to a mace and a train-bearer, was an old beer barrel or inverted washing-tub! The only *melancholy* feature of the meeting was, that another year had rolled away. Such meetings become mementoes, when life is at a shorter and shorter purchase. But the year is gone, and let them make use of its memory. It furnished the evidence of another twelvemonth's trial of the working power of that high morale which regulates, humanises, gentlemanises, this great operative establishment. Is there advance?

But need such a question be asked? The principle—the *religio loci*, must advance—must, every year, produce yet greater respectability, more perfect co-operative harmony, more intelligence, higher morality, more genuine happiness. "The path of the just is like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The year has rolled smoothly on—talent, skill, industry, good sense, and right feeling—steam-press and stereotype—have all done their work well, and sent forth their messenger sheets in millions, with "healing under their wings." The truth had been yet more confirmed, that labour is no evil, but on the contrary a pleasure, because it is the exercise of faculties implanted by divine benevolence, and constituted in harmonious relation to a world created, as it were, in raw material, to be converted to human use by human skill. He might add, that the bygone year had served also to confirm the kindred truth that labour is no degradation; that it is consistent with the highest exercise of intelligence, morality, and refinement; that it has in it the dignity of usefulness, and that a hundred-fold increased, when it is labour like the species-improving labour of this establishment. He had sometimes been described as visionary, because he entertained sanguine hopes of the improvements to be effected by the substitution of the law of gentleness for that of force; but here are results, and there are many such—in education, for instance, where the former tyrant of the young is now their kind and encouraging friend; in the treatment of the insane, restored from their dungeons, chains, and whips, to light, free limbs, cheerfulness, and convalescence; in the treatment of the criminal, who, while in necessary restraint, is yet encouraged by kindness to industry and reformation. Some despair of health being ever given to society, by reason of the very aggravation of the disease; but it had been shown how existing modes of education, and existing rules and practices in society, constantly operate to produce selfishness, and it was evident that the inveteracy of these modes and practices was relaxing, and that great and good things might be looked for in their place. Many who doubt of this would be startled to know that, in doing so, they doubt of what is scripturally affirmed. The rule of kindness advocated by the modern philanthropist actually falls short of what Christianity proclaims, when it tells us that the law of love is omnipotent, and that the meek shall inherit the earth. He beheld this law in nature, and felt unhesitating faith that it would yet be paramount, and justify the great predictions alluded to. Mr Simpson then changed the eloquent strain in which he had indulged, and excited much mirth by a whimsical but happy comparison between this printing and publishing office, and a first-rate ship of war. The company had entered, he said, by a sort of gangway, and first found themselves in what might be called the poop, namely, the warehouse where business was transacted with the retail trade. They had then descended by a kind of companion-ladder into a main-deck, along which they had passed between walls composed of piled reams of paper, the whole of which, he was told, was but a fortnight's supply of the insatiable printing-machines below. They had then come down to the lower deck where they now were. Lower still were the decks and holds, containing a vast magazine of stereotype-plates, and where types were set, and the work of printing by machinery carried on, as also the drying, smoothing, and folding of sheets, and the binding of these into fasciculi and boarded volumes. "The Edinburgh" had discharged many thousands *shots* against Acre. "The Edinburgh" in which they now sat discharged as many *sheets* in the same time, with this superiority, that, while the one Edinburgh knocked out brains, the other improved the brains that were in. An acquaintance of his, in whom the combative and destructive propensities predominated, once volunteered an opinion as to which was the finest passage in the whole of the writings of Sir Walter Scott. "Oh," said he, "there can be no doubt about it: it is the command of the Pirate on going into action with the king's ship—

"Fire on the gangway—fire on the bow,  
Fire on the gun-deck—fire down below!"

"If swords," said Mr Simpson, "are beat into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks, and if (as the plumbers were told when convivially met last winter) lead bullets were bent into water-pipes and cisterns, let us but imagine ourselves actually on board a converted five-decker, and we might then have a travesty of Scott's finest passage applicable to the new system of fighting—

Chop books on the gangway—sheets where'er you go,  
Metal on the gun-deck—and steam down below."

He concluded with a sentiment, which was received with acclamation—"Continuance and progression to the present noble experiment for harmonising masters and men throughout this manufacturing kingdom."

The company having been regaled with several gleees and catches ably performed by the men, women, and boys of the establishment, Lord Murray took occasion to make a few remarks on the value of musical education, as tending to furnish all classes with a pleasing and innocent means of recreation. He bore high praise to the efforts of a juvenile class connected with the printing office, who, though a comparatively short time under tuition, were already able to sing in parts in a very agreeable manner.

The meeting was strictly a temperance one; but the drinking or rather the wishing of healths was commenced in an after part of the evening, and kept up with much spirit, lemonade being the only *liquor* employed. The first toast of this nature was the health, by Mr R. Chambers, of Mr Thomas Smibert, assistant in the literary labours of the copartnersy. Mr Chambers stated that no small portion of the light and graceful literature in the *Journal* proceeded from Mr Smibert's pen, and passed a high eulogium on his general character and attainments.

Mr Smibert, who was much cheered, returned thanks in brief but appropriate terms.

Dr Murray then addressed the meeting at considerable length, enforcing the propriety of temperance and the necessity of economy on the part of the working-classes.

He concluded with some admirable remarks, showing the evils resulting from rash and premature marriages.

Mr Simpson proposed the health of a gentleman whom he was glad to see present, Mr Deverell, who has been appointed the Governor of the great Perth Reformatory for criminals. Mr Deverell briefly returned thanks.

Various other toasts were proposed, and the company separated about eleven o'clock. In the course of the evening a plentiful repast of strawberries and cream was served up, and the intervals were enlivened not only by the vocal performances above alluded to, but by a series of the finest instrumental pieces beautifully executed by Mr Spindler's band.

#### ANXIETIES AND COMFORTS.

Thus dreams which early moments deck'd,  
Hope's sunny summer hours, are o'er;  
And my frail bark at last is wreck'd  
On sullen reason's rocky shore.

I was a joyous streamlet, tost  
From hill to vale in eager play;  
And now among the mountains lost,  
Now sweeping o'er the plains my way.

I kiss'd the flowers—the woods I taught  
To echo back my song:—'tis past!  
Lost in the mighty sea of thought,  
The little streamlet rests at last.

I trembled to the gentle breeze—  
Sent back the gorgeous sunbeams far;  
Heard all the moonlight's mysteries,  
And smiled with every smiling star.

A mingling light of joy and love,  
Of peace and hope a blended sound;  
Heaven's azure arches spread above,  
And laughing nature all around.

Ah! these were blissful moments: yet  
I revel in their memory—  
And present cares and fears forgot  
In that departed ecstasy.

Yes! they are fled—those hours are fled—  
Yet their sweet memories smiling come,  
Like spirits of the hallow'd dead,  
And linger round their earlier home.

Wrapt in the thought, my passions seem  
To drink th' exhausted cup of bliss;  
And do I dream? Was ever dream  
So bright, so beautiful as this?

Alas! I hear the thunders roll,  
And wake, and meditate, and weep!  
Night's gloomy mantle wraps my soul,  
And cheerless silence rules the deep.

I tread my melancholy road,  
No more by vain delusions driven;  
Hold solemn converse with my God,  
And track my onward way to heaven.

Then from the world's proud glare I turn  
To yonder bright and golden sky;  
And there I study—thence I learn  
The worth of worldly pageantry.

No more with dazzled eyes I look  
Upon yon vain and letter'd sage;  
For nature is a gentler book,  
And deeper wisdom fills her page.

Her groves to me are painted halls;  
Perfumes, her early morning air;  
Her mountains, castellated walls—  
And all is honest welcome there.

Her concerts are of birds and bees,  
And rivers, and the glorious sea;  
And holy are her reveries,  
And pure her joys as thought can be.

Why should I murmur?—O'er this scene  
Thou' night descend and thunders roll,  
Man may create a heaven within,  
In the still temple of the soul.

—Bouring's *Matins and Vespers*.

#### A TIPPERARY SHEEP STEALER.

Not many years ago there was in the county of Tipperary a sheep stealer as notorious as Borrowsky himself. It is easy enough to carry off, once you catch it, a sheep in Erris, for, let it be ever so fat, it is not much larger than a hare; but a wether, fed on the rich plains of the most fertile of all Irish counties, is not so easily carried away body and bones. But our Munster plunderer was a huge fellow, with all the bone and muscle of a Tipperary man fed up to all his capability and vigour on the stolen mutton. He therefore could, and often did, carry off from the midst of a flock a wether of twenty-eight pounds the quarter, and bring it home for the feasting of himself and his family. His practice was to tie the sheep by the feet, put his head between the hind legs, and thus, with the sheep still alive dangling head downwards at his back, home trudged, in the dark night, Terry Ryan; and so he thinned many flocks, and none but himself and family were the wiser. In this way he had on a dark night got into Squire's deer park, and seized a noble mutton, and tied and slung it over his head. Thus he came to the park wall, which was about eight feet high, and still, weighted as he was, ventured to climb, as often he had done before. And now he is on the top of the wall, and pondering how best he may descend, when the sheep made a sudden struggle, his footing gives way, down he goes, but, as he goes, the sheep falls inside, he outside. The rope is a good one that keeps sheep and thief together; neither can touch the bottom—both struggle—the rope presses the fellow's windpipe—the sheep kicks, and so does Terry, but it is soon over with him. Next morning the herd found Terry dead as mutton, but the wether, though a little apoplectic, still a sheep, and no mutton; and so proved itself the Jack Ketch of a thief, and the avenger of its race.—*Otray's Sketches in Erris*.

LONDON: Published, with permission of the proprietors, by W. & A. OAN, Paternoster Row.  
Printed by Bradbury and Evans, Whitefriars.